

FROZEN AND SMOKE-DRIED FISH MARKETING IN AKURE METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT ✓

A survey of the prices of fish in two major markets in Akure was conducted between October and December 2008 to compare the prices of the imported fishes and that of the farmed catfishes and tilapias. The survey covered the Erekesan and NEPA markets, Akure. Both structured questionnaires and oral interview were used in data collection. The results indicated that the price of farmed catfishes was highest and that that of the tilapias was marginally lower than that of the croaker. This is evidence of better acceptability of the farmed fishes. The summary of the results showed good future for aquaculture in Nigeria, as good markets exist for the produced fishes.

INTRODUCTION

Fish contributes significantly to the nutritional needs of Nigerians. The protein contribution of fish to the Nigerian diet is estimated at 4.8% of total contribution of protein from all food consumption, (Olayide et al 1981). In Nigeria, the demand for fish and fishery products has been increasing steadily because fish is one of the relatively cheap sources of animal protein. Fisheries make significant contributions to the Nigerian economy in terms of income, employment opportunity and foreign exchange earnings. Marketing and distribution of fish is as important as its production and involves all activities carried out from landing sites to the point of utilization. Such activities include; collection of fish, transportation to landing site, processing and preservation, packaging, transportation to consumers, pricing, buying and utilization (Kohl 1985). In Nigeria, while the male fisherfolks are mainly involved in fishing, the female fisherfolks involve more in fish marketing. Fishes caught in one part of the country may be marketed in Akure, therefore smoking of the fishes is necessary to maintain high quality product before transporting them to the points of needs. As aquaculture production is increasing in Nigeria, just like in other parts of the world, there is a strong need to access the marketing and prices of the aquaculture products visa-vis the imported fisheries products as a way of justifying fish farming in Nigeria. Therefore a market survey was conducted in Akure between October and December 2008 through oral interview and questionnaire to find out the relationships between the prices of the imported fishes and those produced from fish farms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was based on survey of fish marketing and distribution conducted between October and December 2008. The study covered selected markets in Akure. In all, the survey was carried out in two major markets in Akure, namely Oja Oba and NEPA markets. Data collection methods were through primary and secondary sources (personal interviews) and questionnaires and information gotten from relevant textbooks. The personal visit to the selected fish marketers helped not only in getting questionnaires filled out but also in obtaining other relevant information. Language used during the survey was Yoruba to ease the exercise. All the 40 questionnaires distributed were retrieved. The intention of the data collection was to enhance the study focuses most importantly on fish marketing pattern in Akure. The questionnaires pin pointed the inadequacies, problem and proffered possible solutions to the suggested problems of the respondents. The data collection was not without some limitations. This varied from high cost of transportation and hoarding of information by respondent who misconstrued interview for tax collection or a way of assessing their income. Questions were drawn in a structure that would elicit the intended information.

RESULTS

The results showed variations in prices of the same fish products and weight from one location to the other. For instance prices were higher at NEPA market than at Erekesan market. Table 1 showed the prices of 1kg of frozen M.K Titus (sumu), Horse Markerel, Herring and Croaker at Erekesan market. The prices of the same fishes were higher at NEPA market (Table 1) than at Erekesan market. The prices of smoke-dried fishes (Table 1) followed the same trend. However, it was observed that the price of 1kg of farmed catfish was the highest, almost doubling the prices of other imported smoke-

dried fishes. The price of 1kg of smoke-dried Tilapia was also high in comparison with other imported species. The prices of smoke dried shrimp and prawn at Oja-Oba Market were lower than that at the NEPA Market.

Table 1. Types of fish and prices at Erekesan and NEPA markets, Akure.

	Erekesan market	NEPA market
Frozen fish	Price/kg (₦)	
M.K titus (sumu)	400	450
Horse Mackerel (Kote)	320	300
Herring (Sawa)	200	280
Cod (Panla)	-	430
Croacker (Apo)	800	1000
Smoked fish		
Herring (Sawa)	300	370
Catfish (Aro)	1,700	1,700
Titus (Sumu)	700	650
Horse Mackerel	510	-
Cod (Panla)	900	600
Efolo	800	1100
Smoked shell fish		
Prawn	2300	2400
Shrimp	2500	2900

DISCUSSION

Most of the times, the people depend solely on imported fish which raises the market price of the fishes; unlike in Akure where there are many fish ponds owned by individuals, government and corporate bodies which reduces the demand on imported fish. Generally, the prices of the fishes at Erekesan are relatively cheaper compared to NEPA market because it is believed to be owned by the King who influences the price of the commodity in order to make it affordable for the people. The influence might be in terms of collection of little or no rents from the fish marketers compared to other neighbourhood markets. This will in turn lower the market prices of the fishes. Similarly, provision of social amenities like water, electricity and well ventilated environments in the markets also make buying and selling easier for the fish marketers which makes them to reduce their prices. Also the monthly or annual rent paid by the fish marketers at Erekesan market are less or more affordable to the fish marketers compared to the other markets due to influence of the king. The fish marketers make quicker and more sales compared with sellers in other markets. Finally, the better prices of the farm produced catfishes and tilapia in comparison with the prices of the imported fishes is a source of encouragement to fish farmers in Nigeria. This also means wider and better acceptability of the farm produced fishes (Nwanna and Fatunla 2001).

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